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Anniversary Commemoratives

A letter from
THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES


Addresses by
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Assistant Secretary of Agriculture

P. M. JARVIS
*President of Swift & Company
Representing the U. S. Meat Industry*

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MEAT INSPECTION BRANCH, AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH SERVICE,
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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The 50th anniversary of the Meat Inspection Act is being observed in 1956 in various ways. Among them are the letter from President Eisenhower, which is reproduced here, and the three addresses that follow—all three delivered at a commemorative meeting in Washington, D. C., June 27.

These commemorative materials are brought together in this manner not merely to celebrate accomplishment or to preserve a record of the past but primarily to serve as a challenge for the future. Even more effective meat inspection, through even finer cooperation between Industry and Government, is our goal.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

June 23, 1956

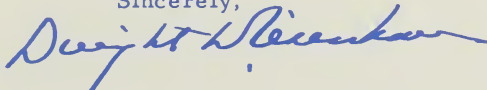
Dear Mr. Secretary:

Please accept my congratulations with those which I understand you and your Department are receiving from all over the world on the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Department's Meat Inspection program.

This anniversary celebration reminds us that we have come to accept Federal meat inspection as part of our daily life in this country. Symbolized by the round purple stamp, Federal inspection has protected consumers here and abroad against the adulteration and misbranding of meat products, has contributed markedly to the development of the great American meat packing industry, and has assured livestock producers that the products of their industry are being properly merchandised.

This year more than one hundred million food animals will be processed in meat packing plants under the supervision of Federal meat inspectors. To you and your Department, and to all in private enterprise who help make such achievements possible, I extend warm congratulations on this anniversary.

Sincerely,



The Honorable Ezra Taft Benson
Secretary of Agriculture
Washington, D. C.

"buy meat with confidence..."

ERWIN L. PETERSON

Assistant Secretary of Agriculture

Secretary Benson sends his greetings.

This is an historic occasion, of importance to every man, woman, and child in America. This is the golden anniversary of one of our most valued public services--*Federal Meat Inspection*.

Secretary Benson and all of us in Agriculture welcome, with enthusiasm, opportunities to celebrate this anniversary. And we are especially grateful to have a part in the ceremonies today.

The commemorative stamp and this commemorative event are a tribute to the vision and leadership of public spirited men and women whose energy brought the pure food and drug laws into existence.

Another stamp--a round purple stamp--has for fifty years been a symbol of purity in meats. It bears the legend, "U. S. Inspected and Passed." It certifies that the meat so stamped has come from a healthy animal and measures up to high standards of wholesomeness and cleanliness.

The law, which brought the meat inspection stamp into use, was signed by President Theodore Roosevelt just fifty years ago this week. There was enormous public interest in the new measure.

Let me sketch the background briefly.

In 1906, our frontier days were over. Railroads spanned the continent. This was a period of great economic expansion.

The products of our farms and ranches were sold on markets around the world.

Cattle and sheep and hogs by the millions were being produced in the Corn Belt and on the Western range. They were being slaughtered to furnish meat, not only for our own fast-growing population but for the great crowded cities of Europe as well.

Enterprising leaders in business and agriculture were constantly seeking ways to improve these livestock products and to extend the markets for them.

A major step had been taken in 1891 when Congress established a service to inspect live animals and meat, but this didn't cover inspection at the packing plant. Growing knowledge of animal disease and sanitation measures soon showed that this was essential.

And so, the eyes of the country--and the world--were on Washington on June 30, 1906, when President Theodore Roosevelt signed the act that established the Federal meat inspection service we know today.

The new service assured our own people the health and economic benefits that come with a clean and wholesome meat supply.

The new service meant growing markets for the producers--the farmers, the ranchers, and the packers. It meant rising sales because people could buy with confidence.

Today, inspectors are stationed at nearly 1200 packing plants in 468 cities across the country. From the first, meat inspection has been conducted by experienced veterinarians. They are assisted by lay inspectors who are carefully selected and especially trained for the work. In the fiscal year just ending, these teams have inspected nearly a hundred million animals.

The cost of this service is low--less than 15 cents an animal, a small fraction of 1 cent per pound. It amounts to about 10 cents a year for each of us.

Federal meat inspection provides health benefits to all of us and economic benefits to the consumer, industry, and the farmer. It has been a potent factor in the growth of our meat industry.

Today, the United States meat industry produces 25 billion pounds a year. Livestock and livestock products account for 55 to 60 percent of all cash farm receipts.

This enormous meat supply means that our people can have diets rich in proteins and associated minerals and vitamins at prices they can afford to pay.

Our people like meat. We enjoy eating it because of its good flavor and because it can be prepared in a great variety of ways.

One fourth of our food money goes for meat. It's the leading item in the family food budget. Last year, on the average, each of us ate about 160 pounds of meat. That doesn't include poultry and fish.

Meat is good for us. A fourth of the protein in our food supply comes from red meat. Along with this valuable high quality protein, meat provides a fourth of the iron and thiamine in our food and about a third of the niacin.

Today consumers take it for granted that the meat they buy is safe to eat. Fully 80 percent of our commercial production of meat is marketed with the Federal stamp of approval.

From the health standpoint, it's impossible to measure the savings in medical expense and the protection of national health that have come with the Federal meat inspection program.

Meat inspection is a key in the control of livestock diseases. Meat inspectors often detect diseases that have not been recognized on the farm. This makes it possible to begin the steps that lead to control and often to eradication of the disease. It helps explain why this country has the healthiest livestock in the world.

In recent years, condemned animals have amounted to less than one-half of one percent of those examined by Federal inspectors. This evidence of good health in the nation's livestock is encouraging to both domestic and foreign buyers.

The meat packers and distributors have found Federal meat inspection an asset in their business. It has a stabilizing effect on the movement of meat through distribution channels. It has created a set of rules by which all members of the industry doing interstate business are governed. And, we owe deep thanks to the many segments of the meat industry for outstanding cooperation over the past 50 years.

And so, meat inspection is paying continuing returns--to the farmer, to the packer, and--most important--to all of us. And the prospect is that this valued public service will continue to play an important role in the years to come.

Meat inspection is one of the many services in the Department of Agriculture that is based on research. It has been steadily improving as the advancing front of science has given us a better understanding of nature's laws and new methods and tools to put these laws to work for the benefit of mankind.

In the fifty years since meat inspection and other pure food laws were passed, science and technology have revolutionized our lives. They have brought improvements in meat production at every step from the barn lot to the supermarket.

Agricultural research has given the farmer superior lines of cattle, swine, and sheep. Along with this, science has provided a continuing flow of new methods for producing high quality meats.

Science has transformed our methods of moving livestock into channels of trade, of processing meat at the packing plant, of holding it under refrigeration, and in packaging it for the retail market.

In the past few years, we've seen scores of innovations in pre-cooked, frozen meats, packaged to serve the buyers' convenience.

Many new developments are on the horizon. The farmer can look forward to productive new forage crops, new ideas in management, and powerful new chemicals for a wide array of farm jobs.

Research now in progress suggests that one day we shall preserve meats by irradiation. And there will be further improvements in methods of attaining quality in meat production and in maintaining it through processing and marketing.

Of this we can be sure, the idea back of the Meat Inspection Act that enables today's housewife to buy meat with confidence will serve us well in the future.

And so, we're glad to pay tribute to the men and women who gave us the Meat Inspection Act and other pure food and drug laws in 1906. We can pay no finer tribute than to dedicate our energies and all of our resources to the never-ending search for knowledge and to the application of this knowledge to the welfare of mankind.

"people working together..."

P. M. JARVIS

President of Swift & Company

Speaking for the Meat Industry

All of us have come to this program today to think about and talk about industry, good laws, government. I believe we can wrap up these topics in one word -- *people*.

So I like to think of the benefits of laws such as the Meat Inspection Act in terms of the men and women who brought it about, who presently administer it, and the men and women whose lives it affects.

Those who drew up the Meat Inspection Act half a century ago were men of foresight. They translated the needs and desires of the people of their era into a law that, with no significant change, serves you and me today as well as it did the people of that time. It has served through years of growth, change, transition, and yet has remained workable and practical. It has been a public service in the most literal and direct sense -- a service that has benefited millions of consumers in America.

The men who administer the act have never lost sight of its original objectives. They have administered the act to meet the demands of a growing nation and a growing industry.

Several such men come to my mind. There was Dr. John R. Mohler, who for nearly 26 years was chief of the Bureau of Animal Industry of the U.S.D.A. In administering the Meat Inspection Act, he was a great balance wheel. He recognized both the practical and the ideal and drew the line between the two in the right place.

Following in the same tradition as a public administrator is Dr. A. R. Miller, the present chief of the Meat Inspection Branch, which formerly was called the Meat Inspection Division. He is a man who has won respect by his fairness and integrity.

There are many others who have served with distinction throughout the years since the Meat Inspection Act was brought into being. As chiefs of the Bureau of Animal Industry there were Drs. A. D. Melvin, A. W. Miller, and B. T. Simms. Dr. B. T. Shaw today is in a comparable position as head of the Agricultural Research Service.

In the Meat Inspection Division, which functioned under the Bureau, Dr. R. P. Steddom was chief for 28 years. Other chiefs were Drs. A. J. Pistor, E. C. Joss, and G. E. Totten.

It is because of the way these men, and those under them, have worked, inspired by their devotion to public service, that we in the meat packing industry think of the Meat Inspection Act in terms of *people*.

The Meat Inspection Branch and the meat packing industry work closely on the many mutual problems that arise. It is people, individuals, working together, making decisions. The M.I.B. approves major construction and rehabilitation projects, labels and labeling materials, in addition to their inspection of slaughtering and processing operations. These men helped develop a resource of vital importance to the industry -- confidence in the mind of the person who buys the product. In fact, many state inspection laws and regulations closely parallel the Meat Inspection Act, emphasizing the high regard in which the **Federal** meat inspection service is held.

This matter of confidence by no means ends at our national boundaries. The M.I.B. furnishes export certificates and becomes an actual liaison between foreign countries and American meat packers. The United States meat inspection service is recognized throughout the civilized world for its high standards.

To the person who buys the meat, the cooperation of those in the meat packing industry and the men in the inspection service means benefits that are very real and very personal -- as real as the meat on the table and as personal as the health of the individual.

In all of this we see public service in action -- service translated into tangible benefits for the public.

These accomplishments over the years have become closely interwoven, the benefits passed along an economic chain -- person to person. The confidence of the consumer helped to assure that the producer would have a demand for his products.

With assured public confidence in the product and with population growth came an ever-increasing demand for meat and meat products.

The producer responded to the challenge, he improved his methods, using the results of research. He applied his own accumulated know-how to the new techniques as they became available.

This emphasizes the third broad field of benefit in which the inspection service has contributed; namely, to the livestock producer.

In another way the service has been an important factor in livestock production progress and that is through its early detection of animal disease. In fiscal 1955, less than 600 beef carcasses were condemned during inspection because of tuberculosis. Twenty-five to thirty years ago, the number of condemnations ran from 50,000 to 70,000 animals each year. In contributing to the eradication of animal disease, the men of the inspection service have, in effect, put money in the farmer's pocket and meat that people need on the table.

I have steered away from statistics, because I have been speaking largely in terms of people. But there is one statistic that caught my eye. You know, the term "billion" is common these days. We can see that figure in a paper or report without giving it a second thought. But we aren't used to the figure "trillion" yet, unless a person happens to be in the field of astronomy. Yet the volume of meat inspected since the enactment of the Meat Inspection Act 50 years ago approaches that huge and incomprehensible figure -- a trillion pounds.

Teamwork, cooperation, confidence -- those are the key words behind this job. People working together. On that basis, the people of the meat packing industry, on this

anniversary, salute the men behind the meat inspection law -- Dr. Mohler, Dr. Miller, and all the others who have made it effective. We salute them for:

1. Half a century of public service in behalf of the consumer, assuring him of wholesome products, helping to give him all-important confidence in the meat and meat products he buys.
2. Cooperative efforts in aiding the producer of livestock; thus protecting and contributing to the value of agricultural products.
3. Willingness to accept new ideas and new processes when these ideas have been proved.
4. Mutually cooperative effort and wholehearted interest in all phases of the meat packing industry. There has been an attitude of "we're in this together" -- with a job to be done and done right. Men of the meat team and of the government teams have worked side-by-side daily. They have met problems and new situations and have found practical answers, without sacrificing principles.

In closing, I want to express the hope that this national meeting will help bring lasting, tangible benefits for all concerned.

This golden anniversary is a golden opportunity for all of us to express appreciation for good laws, drawn by men who were looking ahead, administered by men with know-how, for the benefit of millions of people.

★★★

"both industry and the consumer..."

A. R. MILLER, Chief
Meat Inspection Branch
Agricultural Research Service

This 50th Anniversary celebration commemorating the enactment in 1906 of the Food and Drug Law and the Meat Inspection Law is indeed a memorable occasion. For those of us who administer these laws and become so completely preoccupied with the daily problems and routine connected with their enforcement, it takes an occasion such as this to direct our thinking toward the broad aspects of the laws as they have become an integral part of this country's character. This occasion also refreshes our memory and our understanding of the days when the programs organized under these laws were confronted with what must have seemed then to be insurmountable obstacles found everywhere in the way of integrating the effective administration of these laws into the economies and commercial practices of the period.

We have many times eulogized those men who demonstrated superb leadership in surmounting these hurdles. Something can also be said for the statesmanship of the drafters of the Food and Drug Law and the Meat Inspection Law which at the time of enactment were believed by many to be impractical and unenforceable as imposing on industry requirements that were considered to be excessively restrictive and generally inconsistent with the development and growth of those industries to which the laws apply.

We have here today at this luncheon abundant testimony adding glory to that already heaped on the heads of the early administrators of these laws and, I believe, as has never been demonstrated before, we have here in this assembly overwhelmingly convincing evidence that the legislators who passed the laws in 1906 established a sound basis for healthy growth of the industries affected by these laws which provide just the right amount of government control to permit full normal play of free enterprise.

The inspection law, which was passed in 1906 and which we in meat inspection administer, calls for what might be considered the ultimate in food control. It places Government inspectors in the production lines of meat packing plants engaged in interstate commerce. This accomplishes what President Theodore Roosevelt said was needed when he addressed the United States Senate and the House of Representatives on June 4, 1906, summing up the findings of extensive investigations in these words "A law is needed which will enable the inspectors of the general government to inspect and supervise from the hoof to the can the preparation of meat food products."

In 1906 this meat inspection program was thought of pretty much as a police action. This was unfortunate because it only made more difficult the organizing of the program and the administration of the law. This attitude which persisted much longer than was justified by the successful assimilation of the meat inspection program in the meat packing industry also stood in the way of the early development of a philosophy which is now universally accepted, namely, that meat inspection is an operational necessity in the meat packing industry. Meat inspection is an essential step in the production of clean and wholesome meat which is available in abundant supply in this country. Today, the inspected meat packer routinely gives consideration to the inspection requirements as he plans his meat production and meat merchandising.

It seems to me to be important that we view the Meat Inspection Act of 1906 as serving primarily to supply this essential governmental control participation in the production lines of the meat packing industry and the correction of objectionable conditions in that industry as following logically. The same reasons for meat inspection control apply today as they did in 1906 when it is borne in mind that the law was passed to meet a situation, not to punish an industry.

Cattle, swine, and sheep are produced on the farms under a tremendous range of environmental conditions. For the most part, these animals are normal and healthy. Actually, we have probably the healthiest livestock population of any country in the world. Nevertheless, large numbers of these animals are effected with the full range

of animal diseases that are common to this country and also to the physical abnormalities that occur inevitably as they are handled on the farm, on trucks, railroad cars and sales pens of various kinds. It is not enough to tell the housewife that most of these animals are healthy. She wants to know that those which are not healthy and those which are abnormal in any respect have been handled under adequate official inspection control to assure that only that meat which is from healthy animals and which is clean and wholesome is being brought into her kitchen to be served to her family.

There is only one way to accomplish this. Official inspectors must be integrated into and must function in the production flow of the slaughtering and meat processing operation.

Food animals today have the same physiological make-up they had in 1906. They are covered with a hairy, soiled hide which must be removed in the dressing operation in such a way as to avoid contamination of the meat that is being prepared for edible purposes. Animals still have intestinal tracts, sinuses, and uro-genital systems which must be handled in the dressing operation with the utmost of care so that the contents of these organs will not contaminate the edible product. These inedible materials that must be separated from the edible products in the conversion of food animals into meat must furthermore be disposed of in a way that will not affect adversely the environmental sanitation of the department in which the meat is prepared. In addition to this, the diseased and otherwise abnormal processes must be detected by routines of inspection procedures that are called ante-mortem and post-mortem inspection.

Each animal presents an individual problem. The diseased or otherwise abnormal process must first be detected, then it must be identified and evaluated as to its significance concerning the affected carcass or part of carcass. In order that the consumer's interest is properly protected and the packer's rights fully observed, Federal meat inspection is organized around the competency of veterinarians whose training and experience make them specialists on the subject of applying those controls which will assure the production of clean, wholesome, disease-free meat.

The law of 1906 extends the inspection controls to the manufacturing methods used in the meat packing plant. The objective here is to exercise sanitation controls and supervise the formulation of meat food products to assure against adulteration. Adulteration here refers to substitution as well as the use of harmful or unfit materials.

The labeling control provided by the law of 1906 is quite far-reaching. It permits only those labels to be used which are approved by the meat inspection program. The objectives of the label approval provision are to prohibit the use of any false or deceptive term and it contemplates the approval of a label only when the name of product is appropriate for the article on which the label is used.

The provisions of the law that applies inspection controls to the methods of manufacture and labeling have taken on considerable significance down through the years. Many problems undreamed of in 1906 are being encountered today resulting from tremendous developments in food technology and modern methods of merchandising. These inspection controls which originally were directed toward correction of rather obvious malpractices today exercise the constructive influence of assuring the production of products which uniformly conform with consumer expectancy both in terms of composition of product and informative labeling.

Those who in 1906 were confident that the Meat Inspection Act would strangle and bankrupt the meat packing industry in this country lived to see the law function as a constructive, stabilizing fact in the trade. They have seen it demonstrated time and again that the law does not stand in the way of progress, development, or the honest exploitation of innovations. There is every reason to believe that this law, which is 50 years old today, will continue to serve both industry and the consumer as industry looks to advances in physics, chemistry, biology, and electronics for contributions to its methods and products and the American consumer expects that such advancements will be consistent with his interests in a clean, disease-free meat supply which is not adulterated and not misbranded. Our experience abundantly indicates that we can expect the law to meet this demand.

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